



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

- ART. IX.—1. *Le Roi des Montagnes*. EDMOND ABOUT.
2. *Les Mariages de Paris. — Germaine*. EDMOND ABOUT.
3. *Les Manieurs d'Argent*. OSCAR DE VALLÉE.
4. *Cinquante Jours au Désert*. CHARLES DIDIER.
5. *Séjour chez le Chérif de la Mecque*. CHARLES DIDIER.
6. *Marthe de Montbrun*. MAX VALREY.
7. *Un Été dans le Sahara*. EUGÈNE FROMENTIN.
8. *Le Réalisme*. CHAMPFLEURY.

IN this list of authors our readers will not recognize every name; but it is impossible, in noticing the successive issues of the French press, to leave out of sight the contemporary school of young writers. It would not, perhaps, be true to say that they recommend themselves to public consideration by their talents, or by the elevation of their ideas, or by the morality of their principles and convictions. Alas! nothing of all this is true. Yet this school cannot be overlooked; for it is a sign of the times, an unmistakable rather than an honorable one.

It is indisputable that the lesser and not the greater creators in the world of art typify national tastes and tendencies. Striking and exceptional individualities are of all lands and ages, and belong merely to that small chosen band of spirits which stands between the human race and the One Thought Supreme. The Homers, Shakespeares, Dantes, Goethes, prove nothing save God's greatness, and explain none of the intellectual phenomena of the particular country or period of time in which they exist. The details of any one particular civilization are exposed and involuntarily commented on by the smaller minds, which, instead of subjugating, are subjected to, the spirit of their time and of their country. Take at the present moment, in France, in Germany, in England, and in America, twenty young writers of the same worth, and you will have a very fair notion of the moral and intellectual tendencies of the races of which these are in reality but a reflection. There is no partiality, no pride of race, in saying that the opinion conceived, after studying the general literature of the four countries we have named, must infallibly

be in favor of the Anglo-Saxon race; whilst the works furnished by the continent of Europe, with hardly any exceptions, bear witness to a state of moral decrepitude and degradation,—to a condition of insalubrity, and what in a material order of things is termed *squalidness*. We need not call to mind that there are still “up and doing” such men as Tocqueville, Cousin, Villemain, and some dozen others, the glory, not of one race, but of all humanity. But these men are of another epoch; they are not the men of this day, whose tastes and tendencies they resist, and energetically make war upon. The young men *and boys* who seize hold of the pen in France, and begin to write, no matter what, no matter where, on escaping from the benches of their college, do not follow in the track of these great thinkers and citizens,—do not aspire to be approved by them,—do not even study what has won their world-wide fame. No! they simply watch the humor of the hour, and dash into it, making up their minds to be utterly cast aside whenever the wind shall set from another quarter. In contradistinction to the high, noble literature of France, from Châteaubriand to Guizot, some few glorious representatives of which still remain, we have now what is entitled *la Littérature de la Bohême*; that is to say, the productions of men without principles or convictions, without courage and perseverance sufficient to toil in some obscure but honest profession for their bread, who, in order to live from day to day, are obliged to condemn their pens to every use, even that of downright calumny. That the greater proportion of these young writers of *la Bohême* are possessed of a certain degree of talent, is incontestable; but it is the mere art of cleverly expressing this or that, whilst the author has in himself nothing to express, no feeling, no belief, to convey. About has talent, Champfleury has talent; but after reading all the volumes the whole school ever wrote, no one would be the richer by one single lofty or honest thought, or by one single idea which he would desire his memory to retain. Yet these young men replenish the railway libraries, gain for a short time considerable sums, and may see their works in the hands of nine tenths of the inhabitants of France. That they reflect the general color and tone of modern French civ-

ilization is indisputable, and it is from this point of view that they merit attention.

At the head of this "Bohemian literature," and one of its completest types, stands Edmond About, a man under thirty, who has already well-nigh written himself out, but who was indubitably gifted with a very large share of what the French term *esprit*, and who, had he possessed any other more serious quality, might have shone steadily as a star in the literary firmament, instead of sparkling for an instant as an *ignis fatuus* over a reeking marsh.

M. About's first work of any importance was a small volume, published three years ago, upon Greece, in which facts exaggerated and distorted were so presented to the public as to produce an immediate success. The book had a great sale, and was certainly most amusingly written. Some months later the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published a *nouvelle* by the same author, entitled *Tolla Feraldi*, a sketch of Roman manners, the truth and vivacity of which were universally admired. But before the entire tale was well-nigh complete, out came some revelations that diminished strangely the author's renown. *Tolla* was discovered, in its most interesting parts, to be the translation of a pamphlet printed and suppressed in Rome, containing the history and original letters of a young lady of high family; and in the remainder, to be a calumnious *vendetta* of the author against some persons by whom he imagined himself slighted. Great scandal came of all this. Of course M. About tried to attenuate the accusations brought against him; but his career in what is termed serious literature was stopped; the *Revue des Deux Mondes* withdrew from any partnership with so unsafe a personage, and the author of *Tolla* made his new home in the *Moniteur*, and in the *Figaro*, the lowest and vilest of those small journals which in Paris gain a livelihood by revealing all the private scandal which they can lay hands upon. The *Figaro* was, on account of its perpetual attacks upon the members of the Opposition, supported by the government, and M. About's so-called *Chronique de Paris* was allowed to assail private reputations to the right and left; but for an inadvertent expression employed concerning the archbishop's assas-

sin, Verger, M. About was ordered to resign his office of chronicler in the *Figaro*, and was confined to the feuilleton of the *Moniteur*, in which paper have appeared his best works. Of these, the two that have been most read, and are best worth reading, are, without a doubt, *Le Roi des Montagnes*, and *Germaine*, which is one of the series entitled *Les Mariages de Paris*.

Le Roi des Montagnes is full of *esprit*, and of a certain kind of sharp observation, from beginning to end. The story is simply that of a young German doctor sent by his native town of Hamburg to herborize in Greece, and enrich the Botanical Garden of the great Hanse city by specimens of the Flora of Athens, and who, while so employed, is made prisoner by a terrible bandit chief, called Hadji-Stavros, surnamed "the King of the Mountains." Worse than even the redoubted outlaw (who, by the way, is an outlaw only *pro forma* in the hopeful realm of Greece) turns out for the Hamburg doctor a certain young English miss, whom, with her mamma, he encounters in one of his botanical excursions, and who is taken prisoner with him by Hadji-Stavros. The fair-haired professor (who wears a pair of gold spectacles) does not absolutely fall in love with Miss Mary Ann Simons, but is for ever speculating upon what would happen to him if he should do so ; and at last he is fired by some well-calculated words uttered by the elder lady, in which she hints that her daughter's hand might be the reward of the "hero" who should deliver both ladies and their purses from Hadji-Stavros ; and he attempts the work of rescue, fails therein, and is retaken, after having contributed to cheat the bandit chieftain of his ransom, and lost his chance of espousing Miss Mary Ann. The modern bandit of Greece is exceedingly well painted, and is a singularly original type. He is a most business-like rascal, who not only stops people on the highway, and even cuts off their heads "for a consideration," but who has raised brigandage into a trade, a profession. Submitting to the influence of a money-getting age, he has devised the establishment of highway robbery by a joint-stock company, and among his shareholders he counts many of the foremost personages of Athens ; ministers even, and, above all,

superior officers of the army and *gendarmérie corps*. A scene full of a genuine comic spirit is that where, before consenting to take any notice of his prisoners, he dictates in their presence his correspondence to one of his secretaries. Three documents are thus framed; a letter to his only child, a girl brought up with every luxury at the first school in Athens; one to John Barley, Esq., Banker, of Cavendish Square, London, in which he prescribes such and such uses to be made of the large sums he has in the hands of the firm; and a Report to the Committee of the Joint-Stock Company he has founded, in order to carry on his wholesale trade of rapine and "black mail." This is full of real humor, and would merit being quoted from beginning to end, did our limits permit it; but there is a still more striking passage, which is that of the *rencontre* between the band of Hadji-Stavros and a company of *gendarmes* despatched to punish the incorrigible offender, and deliver his captives. A scout flies into the camp screaming out that an armed force is approaching. "Whose company?" inquires the chief. "I don't know, because I can't read," replies the sentinel, whose faulty education prevents him from distinguishing what number is visible on the caps of the soldiers. Hadji-Stavros sallies forth. "We are free!" exclaims Miss Mary Ann. "I told you we should be delivered!" exultingly cries Mrs. Simons; "I knew the government would be forced to set us at liberty, and hang these wretches, for I am an Englishwoman, and I should have written to Lord Palmerston." The gold-spectacled German hangs his head, and thinks that in truth the English are a mighty nation, when Hadji-Stavros bounds back into his camp, joyfully shouting, "Good luck, boys! Bring out a keg of Ægina wine,—here is Pericles's company!" And sure enough, a dashing young officer, whom the Hamburg doctor had marked at the court balls of Athens as one of the most elegant of all dancers, springs into the arms of the brigand chief, embraces him tenderly, and the two exchange the titles of "godfather" and "godson"! The arrangements made between the bandit and the gayly attired Captain Pericles are amusing in the extreme; and the upshot of the whole is, that in the Athens journals Pericles shall pass for having

“beaten Hadji-Stavros in a recent encounter, driven him back into the mountains, and dispersed his band,” at the cost for his company of “ten or twelve *gendarmes*,” whom he leaves with the King of the Mountains, in order that they may learn to be good soldiers! Pericles distinctly declares that he is in want of an affair of this kind, in order that he may obtain the decoration of the Saint Sauveur; but besides this distinction, he has all his interests embarked in the enterprises of Hadji-Stavros, he being one of the chief shareholders in the famous joint-stock company! The capture of Mrs. and Miss Simons is to yield no less than four thousand pounds sterling, and upon this ransom turns the entire story. The German doctor knows Modern Greek as well as the banditti around him, and he has listened to the letter written by Hadji-Stavros to his banker, John Barley, and profited largely by his attention. Miss Mary Ann is no other than the niece of the aforesaid John Barley, whose own sister is Mrs. Simons. “Now,” reasons the cunning professor, “if you make your brother pay over four thousand pounds to Hadji-Stavros upon receipt, that sum will merely be deducted from what he possesses in the bank of Barley & Co., and you will be free without having to pay for your liberty.” So said, so done; the four thousand pounds are forwarded to the robber chief, who then and there dismisses his female prisoners, retaining the Hamburg doctor, whose ransom is not forthcoming. A violent dispute ensues between the two, when the fair-haired professor, exasperated, reveals to the robber king what stands written in English in the paper accompanying the sums he had received, — “which sums to be deducted from his account”! The bandit is infuriated, and devises tortures unheard of to punish the botanical professor; but the latter had written to Athens to an American friend of his, a certain John Harris, half sportsman half pirate, who expeditiously insures his friend’s safety by carrying off the daughter of Hadji-Stavros, shutting her up in his yacht, and warning her illustrious sire that “eye for eye and tooth for tooth” should be his rule of conduct towards Mademoiselle Photini; and that as the Hamburg botanist was treated, so should she be. The success of this manœuvre on the part of our countryman, John

Harris, is immediate; and the story ends by the delivery of the German doctor, the retirement from "the public service" of Hadji-Stavros, and the adoption by the gold-spectacled botanist of the idea that he may after all marry Miss Mary Ann, in pursuit of whom he sets off upon travels to which the author abandons him.

We repeat it, it is difficult to evince more of the mere book-making talent, to show more *esprit*, more humor, more comic *verve*, as the French term it, than M. About exhibits in *Le Roi des Montagnes*. Nowhere is a more admirable portrait drawn of the hard-boned, hard-headed, obstinate, brave, proud, hungry, and patriotic elderly Englishwoman, than in Mrs. Simons. She is true to the life. With one hand for ever on a knife and fork, the other is perpetually ready for resistance. She will not be daunted into yielding up her rights, not she! and she is indignant at the idea of *buying* a freedom which "her government," she is convinced, will oblige her enemy to give her. She never forgets her hour of breakfast, lunch, or dinner, and boldly meets every threat by the name of Lord Palmerston.

It would perhaps not be just to say as much of *Les Mariages de Paris*, M. About's last work. In the series of many tales, intended to illustrate the manner in which marriages are brought about in France generally, but more especially in its capital, one has above all arrested public attention, and been both much read and much bought. This is the last of the collection, as it at present stands, and is entitled *Germaine*. It is the tale of a ducal house brought to such helpless, hopeless poverty that it consents to surrender its last scion, a dying girl, to little less than downright shame, by uniting her in the strangest possible manner to a Spanish grandee, who is heart and soul bound over and given up to the most worthless wretch the female sex ever owned. This latter lady, by name Madame Chermidy, is the wife, and hourly hopes to be the widow, of a navy captain who is in China. Her adorer, the Spaniard, is as chivalrous and as simple as any of those brilliant hidalgos who served as models to Cervantes, and he will go any length to gratify a whim of his Dulcinea, or sacrifice his countless millions to avert an

annoyance from her. Now, circumstances require that a lady shall be found who will not only espouse Don Gomez, but who will pass for being the mother of a boy of a few weeks old, to whom the above-mentioned Don Gomez is resolved to leave all he possesses, and his names, titles, and distinctions, which he can do only if the boy is his legitimate offspring. The same physician happens to attend Madame Chermidy and the consumptive Mademoiselle de la Tour d'Embleuse, whose father and mother, the Duc and Duchesse of the same name, are reduced to such straits that one of them (the mother) does not eat a meal every day, in order that her abominable old consort, Monsieur le Duc, may be pampered upon the days when he does not dine out. The doctor, who is one of the few tolerable characters in the book, has set his heart upon making Germaine de la Tour d'Embleuse a grandee of Spain, bringing her to life by proper treatment and a warm climate, and shaking off the woman Chermidy from her prey, Don Gomez. Of course he finds it easy enough, by the offer of a million here and a million there, and by the assurance of *rentes* upon which he may live expensively, to make Monsieur le Duc agree to anything, even to the sale of his only child, upon what seem very like disgraceful terms.

The end of the story is, that Germaine, who is ignorant of half of what has happened, and who is but half aware of what she stands responsible for, gets well in the Ionian Isles, in spite of Madame Chermidy's charitable attempt to send her off to the other world, captivates her husband, and completely rescues him.

But it is precisely here, in the close of the tale, that the author, to our mind, entirely fails. *Germaine* does not begin as a tragic tale, but, on the contrary, as one in which *castigat ridendo mores* was to be the principle followed out, and in the early chapters there is enough of the *esprit* that we have remarked in *Le Roi des Montagnes* to make the book attractive. But here we touch upon the radical defect of this whole school of young book-makers in France, who are writers without being thinkers. They are, as we have said, full of ability; they use words with wondrous dexterity and

grace; they are like those men who, not being genuine equestrians, make their horses dance minuets, but fall back before that "real thing," a fox-hunt. They could say anything anyhow, but *they have nothing to say*. The proof of this is to be found in everything they write. They never take the trouble to *think* a character, to "create," as it is called; they merely describe; and their personages are patchwork. As in Emile Angier's *Mariage d'Olympe*, so in M. About's *Germaine*, the characters do not end as they began; they are other people, not themselves; and the inevitable consequence is, that they sorely embarrass their author, who does not know how to get rid of them. He finishes on the scaffold what was commenced in a saloon, simply for this reason, that his story is true nowhere, neither in the saloon nor on the scaffold.

Another illustration of the deficiency of serious forethought in the productions of the present moment in France is to be found in a work which is worth commenting upon for many reasons, — *Marthe de Montbrun*. This is a tale much read, much discussed, written by a lady who uses the pseudonyme of Max Valrey, and who is perhaps capable of writing a work far more serious and more complete. Still there are things in *Marthe de Montbrun* that make it a book to be attended to for more reasons than one. The story is that of an orphan girl of good birth, brought up by a very worldly-minded aunt, with male and female cousins of similar character, and in the midst of all the corruption of the best possible French society, both in town and country. The romance of Made-moiselle de Montbrun's life, which, but for one incident, might pass on like that of all the young ladies around her, is attached to a certain Spanish refugee, who is *not* a grandee, like Don Gomez, but a man of ordinary birth and of ordinary means; but who, dazzled by a smattering of oratory and of journalism which he is thought to possess, conceives himself intended for a high destiny, passes his existence in what he calls a struggle between passion and the duty he conceives he owes his country, and invariably sacrifices other persons without ever once sacrificing himself. Manuel is a character one meets with every day in what is termed "the world," and there would be but small merit and no originality in painting such

a character well. But the originality of the book is in Marthe herself; and the fact of its being written and read is a *social fact*, and one that must be noted among the accidents of French civilization.

What is the romantic medium, if we may call it so, of French literature,—what the means whereby the reader's interest is to be awakened and held fast? An essentially unhealthy and immoral idea,—the love of a married woman and a married man; an impious and abominable passion, and one that every honest man or woman can vanquish if so minded, but which the French men and women of novels and poetry never transcend the theatrical show of trying to overcome. It is not “received” that fiction, in France, should take for its heroes and heroines those who are unshackled by any tie, and it would seem as if love without dishonor were too insipid a food for the taste of the public. As to a girl, no matter whether she be five-and-twenty or fifteen, she is not taken into account; and the notion of a love springing up in two free hearts, growing to its fullest development in its own natural soil, prompting in both the natures that own it the loftiest deeds and purest sentiments, and in fact perfecting—as it only can do—the mind, heart, and soul,—softening here, strengthening there, and leading to *marriage* as to that one end to arrive at which every lower ambition is spurned and every generous impulse cultivated,—of such a love as this, the main-spring of all Anglo-Saxon civilization, the French have no idea. They would hardly believe in it, and would be slow to understand its beauty, it is so entirely beyond their conventionalities. Now of this piece of hardihood, of this onslaught on French taste and on the polite practices of *le grand monde*, has Max Valrey been guilty; and for this reason we say *Marthe de Montbrun* is a book worth reading.

Another remark or two may not be wasted. If *Marthe de Montbrun* were the work of any woman, who, like Madame Sand and some dozen others that might be named, were unsexed at once by her best and her worst fame, there would be less to say upon the subject, and the whole might pass for the freak of an eccentric imagination, too utterly un-

trammelled by any social ties. But no; the author of *Marthe* is a lady highly born and connected, living in the midst of the stiffest and most conventional French society, and who, from fear lest her opinions should seem too unfeminine, has adopted the pseudonyme we allude to, which, without her permission, we do not feel authorized to cast aside. Not only is she placed in the best and most "regular-minded" society, but she has herself placed her heroine in it also. Marthe is no adventurer, or artist, or governess, or lady "at large," — the only positions in which it is admitted in France that a woman should be single and independent, and admitted then at the price of disgrace. No; Mademoiselle de Montbrun is a young lady, as we have said, well born and well bred; brought up as young ladies should be, with the due complement of nurses, and lady's maids, and *dames de compagnie*, and masters, and well-behaved female friends, who never heard of such a thing as a young lady having a heart or an opinion of her own, except on a bonnet or a flounce, or — what is more proper still — on an embroidery pattern. Yet, in spite of all this, Marthe conceives the idea of having a heart and a mind all to herself, — of actually seeing, hearing, judging, feeling, thinking, and acting as though she were somebody entitled to do so, and not a mere automaton. She is a girl who, in the midst of French conventionalities which say to her, "*You are not*," dares *to be*. This is original, and makes the book — especially in the circumstances under which it was written — worth reading. Marthe does not dream of running away with Manuel, as an English girl would; but she does determine to marry him, and no other, as a French girl would not. The difficulties brought in the way of these two lovers form, of course, the romantic element of the novel, and, as long as these difficulties do not become too dramatic, the tale is a true and an interesting one.

The close of *Marthe de Montbrun*, however, shows, as we remarked above, the same fault that vitiates all the books of this present school. The author never really knew her hero and heroine beforehand, never called these people into life; only loosely thought about them, and painted them from fancy. Consequently she did not know what to do with

them in the end, how to "get rid" of them. And so she, like M. About and M. Angier, resorts to anger instead of argument, and cuts the whole short by an expedient which is not true. Marthe does what she would not have done, what she never did, and what makes her not herself. She, whose whole character is earnest and intense, throws herself away lightly, and loses her lover as well as her honor.

Romance-writers of this school do not reflect that their personages are not at their own disposal, if they are to be personages at all, real characters. Ask Scott and Cooper, ask Fielding and Richardson, and they will all tell you they are controlled by their creations because their creations really are, and live. Sir Walter could not, if he would, make Ravenswood marry Lucy Ashton. Ravenswood exists, and would forbid his doing it. And Lovelace, — see if he be not his chronicler's master all the time, simply because Richardson is only his chronicler, and sees and knows him as he really is, and therefore obeys him. This is the history of all serious writers, who think before they write, and only write because they have thought deeply. Conception is the necessity, — production is a mere consequence; but the fault of all these young writers in France is, that they are for ever producing, whilst in fact they have never conceived.

And now we ought, perhaps, to say by what name these young writers are one and all known, — what is the device they inscribe upon their banner. They are called Realists, and Realism is the object they are supposed to be trying to attain. A word is lightly caught at, particularly in France, and Frenchmen will ride they know not whither, upon any horse you offer them, be he safe or not. One of their present writers, Champfleury, is so tormented by the fashionable epithet, that he has published a whole volume to explain what Realism means, and he has not succeeded. He acknowledges himself a Realist, but he is by no means clear as to what that term implies, and he proves this at once by his misapprehension of certain conditions of art, in the following passage: —

"What is the existing generation desirous of? Does it know? Can it know, in the midst of the social storms during which it has completed its rude education?

“Granted that a few spirits are called forth, who, tired of versified lies, and of the absurd persistence of the tail of the Romantic school, resolutely throw themselves into the study of Nature, descending even to her lowest regions, and throwing off the shackles of ‘fine language,’ out of all harmony with the subjects they treat of, — will these form the basis of a school? I hardly think it.

“Yet everywhere in other countries, in England, in America, in Germany, in Sweden, in Holland, in Belgium, in Russia, — everywhere, I see writers of fiction, who submit to the universal law, and are influenced by mysterious currents, charged with realities.

“I do not think it is requisite to quote Dickens, Thackeray, Currer Bell, Gogol, Hildebrand, Auerbach, Conscience, or Miss Bremer, with fifty others, who, if you convened them all together, would tell you their thought and their pen are devoted to observation by a kind of fatality which neither men nor writers can escape in our nether world.

“It is the law of the epoch.”

Now here it is we should like to differ from M. Champfleury, who, be it said *en passant*, is, like the rest of his brethren, full of talent, but who, like them, mistakes the appearance for the truth, the shadow for the substance. No “epoch,” whatever he may imagine, condemns by any “fatality” its thinkers to the mere trade of “observation,” just as no epoch ever existed in which reflecting men could altogether do without observation. Mere writers, who are not thinkers, may observe, and no more; but those who write because they have thought, that is, who produce because they have conceived, cannot do so. Creation is a gift far sublimer than all this comes to. People who paint the outward garb of a figure may have little else to do than observe the rapid changes of fashion, and the smallest detail of a plait or fold of silk or linen; but people who paint men, and therefore create them, know the object of their study to be eternal, and are not much influenced by this or that accident of time. Here lies the mistake, — to fancy this present epoch either more or less than its predecessors with regard to man. It is just what all other epochs have been, only it has a strong industrial and unartistic tendency, which leads it to fancy that the product of the brain can be regulated like that of the loom, — “Being given so many novel-writers, shall be produced so many novels.” This is an error. Art is still

what it ever was and ever will be, — a world apart, above the world of mere material combinations; and the great mistake made by these extraordinary writing engines, the fiction-writers of the young French school, is to imagine that the nature of art has been modified. So, again, with the word Realism; it is an absurd one, and means nothing. All art is a compound of the Real and the Ideal, and no artist, no creator, has ever lived through ages who has not just the requisite Realism of detail at the service of the immaterialism of his idea. What a human being is without his soul — that is, a corpse — is the dead appearance that is offered to view by a work whence the Ideal is absent. Dress up your corpse in all the splendors of Solomon; — you may admire the stuffs in which the dead body is attired; but it will be a dead body for all that, and to make it move and live is beyond you. Take away from a spirit its outward, tangible form and garb; you have a seraph or an angel, something you not do feel at home with because it is out of the reality of your sphere. These are the two extremes; but in the combination of the two lies the domain of creative art. There it has always lain, and there it will always lie. Look at Homer, and at Dante, and at Shakespeare. We shall not be told their epoch influenced them; yet was ever Realism, as it is called, more intense than in Priam and in Hecuba, in Thersites and in Nestor? And is not Ugolino, is not Francesca da Rimini, real? As to Shakespeare, never was idealism so inseparable from reality as in him, and not one of his characters, from Desdemona down to Audrey, but would suffice to knock upon the head all the vulgar theories of these purblind young pen-holders who have grown to fancy that their “epoch” it is, forsooth, that is by a “fatality” condemning them to a species of photography in literature which they are pleased to style “observation.”

A few hours may, perhaps, not be wasted in reading through such a book as *Le Réalisme*. It shows accurately enough what the mistakes of the present school are, and it is undoubtedly the work of a man who asks no better than to see his way, but who would be astonished beyond all description if he were told that nature most likely never intended him to write at all!

As we have said already, the great cause of all this so-called "Realism" (for, absurd though the word be, it is hard to find a better) is perhaps to be traced to the materialism of the age in general, more visible in France than anywhere else; and possibly the very best commentary upon it all may be found in a little work that belongs less to literature, in a restricted sense, than to that spirit whence literature springs, with all the other artistic manifestations of a nation. This book is entitled *Les Manieurs d'Argent*, and is an attack upon the covetousness of all classes in France, — upon that rapacity which leads men to prize nothing except in the precise measure in which it can be converted into gold. This, with the violently industrial tendencies of the hour, will probably be found at the root of everything that in France is false both in morality and in the arts. *Les Manieurs d'Argent* has had a great success, and is in some respects exactly the reverse of the works we have just spoken of. It is written by a magistrate, M. Oscar de Vallée, and is full of earnest purpose, without much talent, and without any skill as to the mere writing. The following passage of the first chapter is worth quoting, for it strikes, as we said above, at the root of the evil in France.

"There is truth in the saying, that 'nations have the government they deserve.' This was already the opinion of Horace when he undertook to show the impotence of laws without national habits and manners (*Quid leges, sine moribus, etc.*). He told the corrupt descendants of the race that had conquered the world, that 'the unbridled love of gold is stronger than law,' and that 'they were lost if they did not bury in the deep the diamonds and pearls and useless gold which were but the sources of every ill (*summi materiem mali*).' What high minds mourned over in the Rome of the Cæsars was far less freedom forfeited than public virtue destroyed. And herein they were right. . . . The origin of all political degradation lies in the corruption of hearts that are filled with the insatiable love of riches easily obtained.

"Listen to Juvenal: he attacks here and there both Pompey and Cæsar; but the enemy he never allows to rest, and is for ever striking with his utmost might, is the despotism of gold, — *sanctissima divitiarum majestas*. This he accuses of having weakened Rome, and he describes it as like a leprosy fastening on the loins of what had been once a generous race.

"It was the deficiency of public virtue, and not the deficiency of the

laws, that drove men in ancient Rome to get rich quickly, even at the cost of honor. The love of gambling possessed Rome and smothered all honest impulse; infamy was hidden under the gold that rose high enough to cover it. . . . Her vices dishonored Rome, and paved the way for the ruin of Roman society. If these vices had been born of the law merely, it would have sufficed to alter the law; but they came from that part of the human heart which, unless in the purest air, soon grows corrupt, and they attained their maturity victoriously; for instead of having shame cast upon them, they were let alone, when they were not actually applauded. Juvenal does not deduce the cause of this horrible contagion from the institutions of Rome, but from the examples and lessons fathers give their sons. What matter whether Cicero speak out or be silent, when fathers instruct their sons in the most sordid details of the art of making money rapidly? All is lost then.

“Even in the days of Ennius, no one asked whence riches came, and it was sufficient to be rich. You must go back to a very early period in Roman history to find out the origin of corruption, and Montesquieu will be eternally right when he traces the fall of the empire to the loss of public morals.

“When a constituted society comes to deify gold, to hold up riches as the praiseworthy aim of a life, and the great agent of happiness, even the so-called ‘master-works’ that its artists may produce will have only an apparent glitter; for such a society is severed from the living gods of art, and is become fragile as the metal it adores.

“We must not disguise it to ourselves; if our social and political state is not absolutely analogous to that of the Roman Empire, it is nevertheless certain that we yield, without measure or restraint, to the all-absorbing love of riches easily acquired, and that this is a state of disease calling for the physician with the least possible delay.”

Now here, be it remarked, is the stimulus to every exertion, healthy or not, — “Riches easily acquired.” It is a dishonest tendency, and the age is dishonest in France. The honest acquisition of the reward for honest labor is another thing altogether, and there are, after all, but few who have not been able by courageous efforts to secure the remuneration their labor has been worth. But the French system at the present time is to obtain more than the worth of the merchandise sold, which is simply cheating. Now cheating in art is decay in art; for art cannot be, if not true. What these young writers want to do is to “acquire riches quickly,” and therefore they force production, as if production in the intellectual soil could

be forced. There are, of course, some exceptions, which prove nothing, unless the vitiated taste of the public, which is satisfied with painting and music and writing by the yard or sheet, and helps the literary "contractors" of France to make their fortunes at its own cost.

This is undoubtedly but an indifferent state of things. As long as the few veterans of the last generation endure, the harm done will not be so evident, because in the glory of these men of the past the littleness of those of the present stares one less in the face; but when the heroes of French literature die out (as they will probably within the next ten years), it will then become manifest that they leave no one to succeed them, and it will scarcely be possible for France to maintain her self-assumed, and in some degree merited, name of the "brain of Europe."

In contradistinction to the sordid instincts that inspire them at home, the young generation of Frenchmen have within their reach a world that should teach them all great thoughts,—a civilization the aspect of which should abstract their minds from the miserable interests they so basely serve in their own country. We allude to Algeria. If ever there were a field for poetry, it is there; yet hitherto it is strange how little it has been cultivated by the conquering race. Latterly, however, this has altered somewhat, and, in the midst of a host of lesser publications on the same subject, the only work that has really, for months past, produced a sensation from its strong poetic feeling, is one of which the desert is the sole theme. *A Summer in the Sahara*, by Eugène Fromentin, has taken the French reading public by surprise, and almost made it confess that the gold of the sun's rays, as he sets on the sands of Arabian wastes, may be as worthy an object for the mind's contemplation as the base coin upon which it concentrates its yearnings. To this book we will refer more at length by and by; meanwhile there are two volumes by Charles Didier that ought not to be left unattended to. M. Didier is that very rare personage, a conscientious, impartial, truth-seeking, and truth-telling traveller. He travels neither to prove anything, nor to pin elegiacs on mile-stones out of place. He travels to see, and to relate simply what he has seen. His

"*Desert*" is not that of the author we have above mentioned; it is that lying between the Red Sea and the Nile, and his *Fifty Days in the Desert* is a volume full of solid instruction and original matter. His other book is called *Séjour chez le Grand Chérif de la Mecque*, and treats of men and things seldom visited by a Christian traveller.

We would particularly recommend to our readers the chapters in this last-mentioned work entitled *Djeddah, The Red Sea, The Schérifs and Wahabites*, and *Galerie Vivante*.

"The Mekka pilgrimage is much gone down latterly," says M. Didier. "Those of poorer estate and middling condition still discharge this duty in goodly numbers; but whether from want of zeal, or from pecuniary embarrassment, or from avarice, the rich manage now-a-days to evade it, and there are no longer to be seen pouring out from Islam those mighty lords of other times, who upon this solemn occasion used to display a magnificence that has become only a matter for tradition, and is now for ever banished to the marvels of the Arabian Nights."

M. Didier relates, however, that the last pilgrimage had brought to the sacred city, from the remotest end of Persia, a widow lady of great consequence, who, although she avoided a splendor no longer in fashion in the East, yet travelled with a princely retinue, and communicated with public functionaries, of no matter what rank, only by the intervention of her major-domo, a black eunuch.

In his *Galerie Vivante*, M. Didier has the following portrait of a captain of *Bachi-bouzouks*:—

"Kurde-Osman-Agh was *Sandjiak*, or chief of some thousand or twelve hundred men of irregular cavalry, stationed for the most part on the Mekka road, and perpetually ready for revolt because perpetually unpaid. If money had not come in the end from Constantinople, a universal mutiny would have ensued." (This was in 1854.) "These *condottieri* of the East, called *Bachi-bouzouks*, which in Turkish means *broken heads*, are the curse of the countries where the Porte sends them as garrison-troops; they seize on everything in the bazaars without paying, and maltreat the tradesmen who dare to complain. A man's life is in their eyes of no more worth than a dog's, and of far less than a horse's. One of these ruffians met the other day a woman without her veil; he drew out a pistol, aimed quickly at her, and blew her brains out before all the world; after which he coolly replaced his pis-

tol in his belt, and went his way, curling his mustachios, without any one feeling inclined to obstruct him or look upon him with horror or affright. Let it be imagined what is the fate of populations that are by war placed at the mercy of such barbarians as these !”

M. Didier's volumes, as will be seen from these extracts, treat more of the sedentary than of the migratory populations, and he has to deal with the representative of a somewhat worn-out civilization,—with the Turk, rather than with that eternally primitive and Biblical wanderer, the Arab. It is precisely this study of a race that *must* soon die out which makes his observations valuable. You see what the Asiatic Turk has become, and also what he will never be. You see what the contact of European corruption and narrow-mindedness has made of the town residents of Asia, who, as our author says, “have thereby lost ninety per cent”; but you have comparatively little to do with the free son of the waste, who, for more than one reason, may be transformed, and by agriculture and by war still endure, instead of literally rotting off into decay, as the Turk will ere long, poisoned by the vices of a civilization whose virtues lie entirely out of his reach, and are absolutely inapplicable to him.

“The hatred of Arab to Turk,” says M. Didier, “is something extraordinary; there is between the races an invincible antipathy, an utterly irreconcilable dislike. The proverbial expression of ‘bitter as Turk to Moor’ is more than ever true, the Arabs being Moors. The Osmanlis, as conquerors, treat the subject race with intolerable despotism and haughtiness. The Arabs, on the other hand, proud as they are free, regard their masters with a hate that is inferior only to their contempt. They are furious at the ignorance of the Turks, and at the absurd way in which the latter speak the Arabian tongue; they declare a Turk cannot read the Koran in the original, and does not know how to say his prayers correctly. Above all, they say they are perfidy itself; they give them the surname of *Khain* (traitor), and laugh at the notion of the Sultan, who calls himself *Khan*, which in Arabic signifies *he has betrayed*. Their legend is, that a certain Sultan, having been false to his promise with an Arab, the latter called him *Sultan Khan*, or *Sultan who has betrayed*, and the Turk, not knowing the real meaning of the word, took it for a title, and in his ignorance added to it his other names, and left it to his successors.

The name of 'Turk' is an insult even between children; they apply it to one another when they are angry, and give it commonly to their dogs."

Now M. Fromentin's *Summer in the Sahara* treats of the reverse side of Asiatic civilization, and is entirely confined to the conquered race, to the Arab and to his desert home, if *home* it can be called. Never has the country which is now called "French Africa" been made so real to the reader as in this delightful little book. It is a sort of *Eöthen*, only that one of the merits of *Eöthen* lies in the contact of Western and Eastern civilization, whereas M. Fromentin is so entirely absorbed by the aspects of the East, that he reflects back to us the East, and the East only. He brings before us all he sees, without any intermediary between it and us. We are with him in the Desert; and this is the master-charm of the book.

Like all really poetical works, *A Summer in the Sahara* deals with a very limited range of subjects, and its writer finds the springs of poetry in himself, and not in the objects around him. These *are* poetical, which is of small consequence; but he sees them poetically, which is the thing required. Only three places are touched upon during the whole two hundred and ninety pages, — Medeah, El-Aghouat, and Tadjemout-Ain-Mahdy; but these stand in the book, as in the desert, bathed in an atmosphere of heat and light, — apart and in a world which is not the world of our every-day occupations.

On the 22d of May, 1853, M. Fromentin started from Medeah to reach the Desert; to find, as he says, "a spot where winter never came." His book closes in July, and consists of the familiar letters written during those two months to an intimate friend.

"I have studied," he says at the outset of his journey, "the map of the country south of Medeah and up to El-Aghouat. I have studied it more as a painter than as a geographer, and here is what I find: Mountains up as far as Baghar; — after Baghar, under the name of the *Sahara*, plains that succeed to plains; plains flat and marshy; plains sandy, dry, and stony; plains that are wavy and overgrown with *Alfa*; — and then, twelve leagues north of El-Aghouat, a palm-tree; — at last

El-Aghouat itself, figured by a point rather larger than the rest, in the midst of the intersections of a multitude of broken lines, branching off in all directions, towards places with strange, half-fabulous names; — beyond this, to the southeast, all at once a plain of infinite flatness, — flat as far on as the eye can reach; and upon this vast space, left blank and empty, a name that would make many a one stop to reflect, — *Bled-el-Ateuch*, namely, *The Land of Thirst*. I suppose most persons would draw back before the dread nakedness of such an itinerary. I confess it is precisely this nakedness that draws me on. Perhaps I have an aim to gain in making this journey; if so, it will, if ever gained, explain itself; if not, why talk of it here? Grant me but this: that I passionately love *the blue*, and that there are on earth two things I am burning to behold again, — the sky without a cloud above the desert without a shadow.”

These words tell the attraction of the book. It is written *passionately*. You see in every line how intensely the writer has felt and loved what he has spoken of; and this, as it is in the nature of all real passion to do, carries you away with it.

The Arab is painted as he really is, by M. Fromentin, and there is no fancy-dress work in his descriptions, but you see that he dwells more tenderly with nature than with man, and above all, as he himself says, with a certain phasis of nature, with the arid, burning-blue, sharp-outlined waste. The desert has secrets it reveals to him, and which he tells in turn.

“If I am not mistaken,” says our traveller, on reaching Baghar, “I have now before me the African Africa of my dreams, and I shall probably, in all my journey, learn little more than I have learned to-day. Here, gazing on night, I end my first camp-watch. The air is not damp, but the earth is soft, and the cloth of our tents saturated with dew. The moon, about to rise, whitens the horizon above the distant woods. Our bivouac sleeps in deep shade. The fires lighted in the midst of the tents, and round which till now our Arabs have gathered, whispering I know not what tales, — the fires are abandoned, and gone out, leaving no trace save a vague, resinous odor, which flings its perfume over the whole camp; our steeds quiver amorously, and from time to time cast towards the invisible object of their ardor a neigh as sharp as the clarion’s tone; whilst from its hidden perch an owl breaks the silence of night by that one single wailing note, *clou!* that falls regularly on the ear, and seems rather a sonorous respiration than a chant.”

It may not be without interest for our readers to know what the word *Sahara* means in fact, and the following few lines contain perhaps some information not familiar to all.

"Geographically," says M. Fromentin, "the Sahara begins at Baghar; that is to say, there ends the hilly region of cultivable land, known under the name of the Tell. The etymology of the terms Tell and Sahara is, however, not decided upon. General Daumas, in his work that is even now most valuable, after eight years of discoveries, *The Sahara of Algeria*, gives one etymology which I acknowledge pleases me, from its Arabic origin. According to him, Sahara comes from Sehaur, namely, the precise moment when in the twenty-four hours day is just about to be, but is not yet, and at which even in fast time it is allowed to eat, drink, and smoke. Tell, also, he thinks, is derived from Tali, i. e. the last. The Sahara would therefore mean the vast flat country where the Sehaur is most easy to appreciate, and, by analogy, the Tell would be the mountainous district behind the Sahara, where the Sehaur would be last to be seized."

At all events, M. Fromentin establishes the fact that *Sahara* does not mean *desert*; but is merely the general name or any country composed of plains, whether inhabited or not; and he teaches us that, accordingly as these plains are more or less habitable by sedentary or wandering tribes, they take the name of Fiafi, or Kifar, or Falat. Now, from Algiers to the Sandy Sea, or Great Desert, which commences at Touat, there are some forty days' march; so that, although when we are at Baghar with M. Fromentin we stand on the verge of the Sahara, we are not for that reason on the edge of the desert, or Falat.

The purely contemplative or poetic element is not the only one to be found in M. Fromentin's book. There is also a strong dramatic sense, and we would advise all who wish to seize the manners and customs of the Arab tribes to the life, to study well the descriptions of the siege of El-Aghouat, of the murder of the two poor Nayliette girls, of the encounter with the caravan of a Bedouin Emir or prince, and of the arrest of the native servant who had stolen a purse. There are characters, too, in this little book that will live for ever; and the French Lieutenant, the ostrich-hunter, the flute-player Aouïmer, and the Kalifat Si-Chériff would be well placed by the side of the finest creations of Cooper or Walter Scott.

As our limits will not let us quote every passage that tempts us in this charming work, we will end with the following, which gives an admirable picture of what the effect of a desert day may be upon a European : —

“ We have enjoyed an incomparable day. My tent is opened to the south, which is what I like. All my companions are absent or plunged in their siesta ; and thus alone I inhale with delight a warm moist wind that feebly breathes from the southeast. In front of me I have all our camp-horses, camels, baggage, tents ; in the shadow of the latter are some human beings who seek rest ; they are seated all together, but they do not speak. If a wild dove flies over my head, I see its shadow glide over the ground, so smooth is it, and I hear the sound of its wings, so absolute is the hush of all things round me. Silence is one of the most subtle charms of this land of solitude and blankness. It gives to the soul an equilibrium you know nothing of, who live in the midst of tumult ; far from oppressing, it disposes the mind to pleasant thoughts ; you fancy silence means absence of noise, as darkness means absence of light ; this is an error. If I may compare the sensations of the ear to those of the eye, I would say that the silence that is spread over a vast space like this is a sort of aerial translucidity, that only quickens our perceptions, and lays bare to us the world of infinitely small sounds, revealing to us pleasures indescribable and infinite. By every satisfied sense do I absorb the joy of a nomad life ; nothing fails me, and my whole fortune is contained in two trunks lashed on to the back of a dromedary. My horse lies stretched before me on the naked earth, ready at a word to transport me to the world's end ; my tent gives me shade during the day, and a home during the night, — I take it with me, and have learnt already not to look upon it without emotion. The thermometer is at 32° [Centig.] in the shade, but neither heat nor light is oppressive. The latter is of an incredible brightness, — just like a second atmosphere bathes you equally on all sides in its impalpable waves, enveloping but not blinding you. Besides, the splendor of the sky is softened by such tender shades of blue, the color of the low heights covered with short grass, already dried to hay, is so soft, the shade, and all that produces it, are so tinged with countless dyes, that the eye suffers no violence, and the aid of reflection is required to understand what is the intensity of light.”

But here we must leave our traveller, earnestly recommending his delightful little book to all who may wish to have a familiar idea of Arab life and of the strange attraction of

the desert. Strange indeed, but strong as strange,—for what are M. Fromentin's last words?

“The thirst one suffers from is beyond all words. Ever the same, ever unbearable. . . . I think even to madness of a glassful of pure cold water. My whole being is transformed into the one raging appetite for drink. Yet no matter! there is in this land a something incomparable, that obliges one to love it. I think with horror that I must turn northwards; and on the day when I shall pass out by the door of the east never to return, I shall bitterly look back towards this wonderful place, and shall with deep, regretful longing salute the menacing horizon that bounds the desolate waste so justly named the Land of Thirst.”

ART. X.—*The Biographical History of Philosophy, from its Origin in Greece down to the Present Day.* By GEORGE HENRY LEWES. Library Edition, much enlarged and thoroughly revised, in two volumes. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1857.

THE study of the history of philosophy, when pursued by means of abstracts and generalizations, must, from the nature of things, be to a certain degree unsatisfactory. Philosophers are in general close writers, as well as close thinkers. A thinker who has spent years in elaborating a system, and at last publishes it to the world, free from those rounded proportions and that outside adornment which swell the bulk of works designed to attract and to gratify the unthinking crowd, does not ordinarily say in a volume what may be as well said in a few pages. What abstract, for instance, can do any justice to the chain of reasoning by which Kant binds the soaring spirit of man within the darkness of his scepticism, in seemingly hopeless imprisonment, until he himself leads him forth again into the free air and sunshine? And if this difficulty is experienced in regard to a merely critical philosophy, it is felt even more strongly in those that are constructive. A mere generalization is most unsubstantial fare. We